

NEW YORK

ABOUT THIS REPORT

The state report is a resource to inform donors and funders about the local context of social issues affecting at-risk populations. This report can be used to better understand the social and economic situation in which the issue exists, as well as statewide initiatives and trends in private and government funding directed

to address the issue. This state level research complements the related social issue report that provides an overview of the issue and approaches to address it and the guide to giving that provides criteria to evaluate organizations working to address the issue.

FACTS: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN NEW YORK

The National Network to End Domestic Violence annually conducts a survey of domestic violence programs to measure the scope of services requested in a single day.

On September 15, 2010, 73 out of 83, or 88 percent, of shelters in New York participated. **They reported that:**¹



5,330 Total number of domestic violence victims who requested services

4,709 Victims whose requests for services were met

621 Victims whose requests for services were not met

SOCIAL ISSUE INDICATORS

SIR emphasizes the importance of data collection and outcome tracking to gauge progress on a given social issue. In the case of addressing domestic violence, current indicators are insufficient due to the difficulty of establishing a direct cause and effect relationship between the variables. For example, an increase in the number of domestic violence incidents that are reported is often used as an indicator of progress on assisting victims. However, external forces render this indicator ineffective.

- The data (domestic violence incidents) is chronically underreported or even unreported because of shame, social taboos, and fear of further abuse.
- An increase in the number of women who report domestic violence annually could represent two possible scenarios: more women are reporting violence because of increased community awareness and support, or abuse incidents are increasing. It is difficult to tell with accuracy which of these factors is affecting the indicator and to what degree.
- The indicator places the inference of blame on the victim by suggesting that violence can be ended by leaving. The empowerment approach, whose goal is to encourage and support victims, is built upon post-victimization assistance and risk minimization through education, knowledge, and counseling. The goal of these services is not to end the violence perpetrated against victims, but to provide assistance and adequate services.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN NEW YORK

COLLABORATIVE RESPONSES BY THE GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY

Public officials and nonprofit organizations in New York are working collaboratively to assist the victims of domestic violence by developing innovative initiatives and programs that integrate services included in the four components of the recommended approach. Such a model will streamline the process in which organizations, at a systemic level, deliver services, and empower victims to protect themselves from harm. This model is rooted in the empowerment approach, calling for increased and improved access to information, knowledge, and education, enabling victims to make informed decisions.

The Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence coordinates the provision of services for victims among numerous city agencies and over 200 community based organizations; one example is the New York City Family Justice Center (FJC).² At the FJC, victims

can walk in and choose which services they want, including civil legal assistance, medical advocacy, housing, and counseling, to achieve long-term financial independence and stability. The need for such centers is highlighted by the 50 percent of victims who visit them, but are not served.

Below are some of the other major joint initiatives enacted by the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence:³

- Criminal justice initiatives are a critical element in New York City's strategy for reducing domestic violence. Such initiatives include Language Line Program, Victim Information and Notification Everyday System, and Digital 911 System. All these enhancements aid NYPD in responding to calls for help, making arrests, and providing referrals to victims.
- Healthcare initiatives are essential for screening patients for domestic violence to intervene as early as possible. Such initiatives include Project H.E.A.L. (Health Emergency

Assistance Link), Take Care New York, Prevention Efforts with Young Parents, and developing and distributing a manual titled Medical Providers' Guide to Managing the Care of Domestic Violence Patients within a Cultural Context.

- Emergency shelters and housing initiatives are at the core of assistance given to victims of domestic violence. Such initiatives include comprehensive programs like HARTS (Housing Assistance for Relocation and Transitional Services). Public policy reform is also currently underway to make housing more readily available and increase permanent housing options for victims.
- Youth education initiatives are built on the premise that violence prevention among the youth is critical in the effort to end domestic violence. Such initiatives include Dating Violence Prevention Program, RAPP (Relationship Abuse Prevention Program), and Youth Education Campaign.
- Child safety initiatives have improved the ability of children's protective services and preventative program staff to assess and respond to child safety issues while providing victims with necessary safety planning assistance. Initiatives include Clinical Consultation Program and Safe Horizons Supervised Visitation Program.
- Other initiatives incorporate elder abuse, outreach, and community awareness and advocacy.

LEGAL RESPONSES

In addition to cross-sectoral work, the city of New York enacted several laws to improve the protection of victims of domestic violence. For example, in June 2005, legislation was passed to create a domestic violence fatality review committee. The committee analyzed data collected to detect patterns and demographic changes with the aim of making recommendations to improve victim services. More recently, in 2010, various pieces of legislation were passed to extend protection to victims, including the following:

- Effective November 11, 2010, Strangulation and Related Offenses bill includes various types of strangulation under the list of family offenses.⁴
- Effective August 13, 2010, Extension of Order of Protection authorizes family courts to extend a current order of protection for a reasonable time based on good cause, even if abuse has not occurred while the order has been in effect.⁵
- Effective August 30, 2010, Protections for Victims in Rent-regulated Apartments permits victims of domestic violence to maintain their rental unit as their primary residence if they have left the unit because of violence.⁶

REFERENCES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

ORGANIZATION	WEBSITE
Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence	www.nyc.gov/domesticviolence
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence	www.ncadv.org
National Network to End Domestic Violence	www.nnedv.org
New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence	www.nyscadv.org
New York State Office for Prevention of Domestic Violence	www.opdv.state.ny.us

ABOUT SOCIAL IMPACT RESEARCH

Social Impact Research (SIR) is the independent research department of Root Cause, a research and consulting firm dedicated to mobilizing the nonprofit, public, and business sectors to work collaboratively in a new social impact market. Modeled after private sector equity research firms, SIR conducts

research on social issues and independent analysis of program performance to provide leaders and funders with the rigorous, actionable information they need to make strategic decisions about creating and investing in social impact.

ENDNOTES

1. National Network to End Domestic Violence, 2010 Domestic Violence Counts: A 24-Hour Census of Domestic Violence Shelters and Services, New York State Summary, September 15, 2010.
2. The State of New York, New York City's Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence, Key New York City Initiatives (New York, June 2009).
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. The State of New York Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, *Ledgislative Summaries by year: 2010*, <http://www.opdv.state.ny.us/law/summ_year10.html?>
6. Ibid.